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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9446
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2586
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1206
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RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1989
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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [TH](#) [KN](#) [KS](#)
SUBJECT: NORTH KOREAN REFUGEE DEVELOPMENTS

REF: VIENTIANE 536

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR SUSAN SUTTON, REASON 1.4 (B,D)

11. (C) UNHCR Regional Representative Hasim Utkan told Refcoord on June 14 that seven of the ten North Koreans who had been detained and released by Lao authorities (reftel) have now arrived in Bangkok and are staying at the shelter for North Korean refugees managed by a South Korean NGO. Utkan expects that they will now enter the resettlement pipeline to South Korea. UNHCR is checking with the ROK Embassy to determine if it has information regarding the other three North Koreans.

12. (C) On a related matter, Utkan reported to Refcoord on June 11 that Thai police had raided the South Korean NGO shelter and arrested several North Koreans. One North Korean was apparently injured in a fall. Those arrested were taken to the Bangkok Immigration Detention Center (IDC). The Thai police have conducted similar actions in the past. According to UNHCR, the manager of the shelter has previously been able to negotiate the release and return to the facility of arrested North Koreans. Whether the arrested North Koreans return to the shelter or stay in the IDC, UNHCR expects that they will continue on in the resettlement pipeline to South Korea.

13. (C) Utkan also reported that the Thai police threatened the shelter manager with arrest. At the request of the ROK Embassy, UNHCR sent a letter June 10 to the police on behalf of the manager. The Thai police have not yet responded. It is unclear why the Thai police raided the shelter. Utkan said they may have acted as part of a larger security effort related to the presence in Bangkok in recent days of various dignitaries attending the 60th anniversary of the King's coronation. Complaints by the neighbors about loud noise from the shelter are another possibility. Utkan speculated that the Thai authorities might also be taking a tougher approach because of their growing concern with the larger number of North Koreans entering Thailand.

BOYCE